

Matvejs' theoretical essays and many of his photos. Among these is the "Art of Easter Island" (1914), the first known book to approach Rapa Nui from an aesthetic perspective. This volume is compiled by Irena Buzinska, curator of the Latvian State Museum of Art in Riga and costs US\$10 plus \$10 for postage. Interested persons may inquire from Irena Buzinska, The State Museum of Art, K. Valdemara 10A, Riga, LV 1010, Latvia.



***Pacific Landscapes: Archaeological Approaches***

Edited by Thegn N. Ladefoged and Michael W. Graves, 2002  
Easter Island Foundation, Bearsville Press, Los Osos, CA.  
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*Review by Dave Tuggle*

*Pacific Landscapes*, derived from a symposium at the 16<sup>th</sup> Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Congress in 1998, contains eleven regional papers and the editors' introduction. The "landscapes" under study are Grand Terre (New Caledonia), New Georgia (Solomons), Babeldaob (Palau), Viti Levu (Fiji), Samoa, Niue, Mangaia (Southern Cooks), the Western Societies, Easter Island, Hawai'i Island, and the Cook Strait (New Zealand).

This is a well-written collection of papers that constitutes a valuable contribution to the archaeology of the Pacific. However, before addressing that in detail, let me get the negative side out of the way. The reader should be warned that if you approach this volume expecting to learn what landscape archaeology is, your fears will be realized when it is found to be nothing and everything. That is to say, there are numerous archaeological approaches and types of studies that are called landscape archaeology, but there is no core concept, theory, or method held in common that justifies identifying them as a particular "archaeology." Further, authors in this volume seem to be in search of every possible landscape phrase possible, so that we find: ethnographic landscape, cultural landscape, culturally perceived landscape, social landscape, physical landscape, natural landscape, historical landscape, and prehistoric landscape. This is one of the many cases where archaeologists demonstrate how we are cultural participants by latching onto a term that comes into vogue within the larger culture of academics, scientists, and government "resource managers" (another such term). This has been pointed out in a number of recent studies and critiques of landscape archaeology. For example Stoddard and Zubrow (1999:686, 688) comment that:

Landscapes have become a major academic industry in recent years...However, the current diversity of landscape approaches is now too great to be encompassed in one definition or approach.

The editors of *Pacific Landscapes* recognize this problem (p. 6), but they indicate they are taking a "different tack" with this set of studies, and also list themes that suggest to them a coalescing of landscape archaeology as a discipline (p.5), but then seem to contradict this by noting that "these studies are varied and reflect a range of approaches to landscape archaeology..." I fail to see that any different tact is demonstrated in the volume, and the list of coalescing themes is unconvincing to

me. In fact, several of the papers in the volume are settlement pattern studies (as indicated below in the discussion of individual contributions) with no particular attention to landscape. However, is this a serious criticism? Not of the book itself because the quality of these regional studies diminishes such a concern. However, I consider it a serious criticism to the extent that the volume represents our difficulties as a discipline to develop clear concepts of what we are doing at the most basic level. I believe this problem constantly plagues our research and our ability to express concise, coherent conclusions based on that research.

To complete the comments on the negative side, it would have been beneficial to have had a few more papers from Melanesia and certainly from Micronesia (represented by only one contribution), and one more round of editing would have been welcomed. There are a few typographical errors that should have been caught (including the misspelling of T. Nagaoka's name in the "Contents"), and several maps that are incomplete or have errors (for example, the island of Grand Terre is not labeled on the map of New Caledonia, Chapter 2, Figure 1; and the general map of the Pacific islands, Chapter 1, Figure 1, fails to show Palau, an island group that is a chapter subject). Curiously there is also no institutional affiliation or biographical information about the contributors.

Turning to the positive side, the papers are reviewed in their order of appearance in the volume

Cristophe Sand's study of New Caledonia is a comprehensive summary of settlement, agriculture, and environmental change that is an important contribution to English language Pacific studies. (And I thank Mike Carson for his comments to me about this paper.) Much of this material has been available only in French, and in many cases in sources difficult to obtain. One of the important issues raised is comparison of the ethnographic model of "traditional" society (based on descriptions of a post-Contact impoverished culture) with archaeological reconstructions. This problem is also addressed in several other papers in the collection. It is of value to keep this in front of us in order to avoid intellectual laziness. It is easier to project ethnographic models onto the archaeological record than it is to test them against the archaeological record. On another subject, more attention to the question of drastic changes in island environment during human occupation would have been valuable, but this is addressed in several of Sand's other publications. And as is the case with many of the areas discussed in this volume, New Caledonia is a place where there is a great deal of ongoing work, much of which is directed toward landscape change and the evolution of settlement structure.

Peter J. Sheppard, Shankar Aswani, Richard Walter, and Takuya Nagaoka's paper on Roviana Lagoon, New Georgia provides one of the longer theoretical discussions in the volume. The discussion of selectionist theory is perhaps too long for a volume of regional focus, and even a bit more out of place in light of the fact that, as the authors concede (p. 57), they could not adequately couch their analysis or draw conclusions within that framework. That small problem aside, they have produced an historical study of shrine construction on the islands around the lagoon that is of considerable interest. This involves analysis of changes in shrine form, labor expenditure, and the social role of shrines. Change in the social role includes "a transforma-

tion of shrines in the nineteenth century from centers of ancestral efficacy to markers of land tenure..." (p. 55), which in turn has resulted in their current politicization where land and sea tenure is a "belligerent issue" of unprecedented proportions.

Stephen Wickler's paper on Palau has the interesting comment in the Acknowledgements (p. 90) that "the present paper bears little resemblance to the first," presented at the 1998 conference after he directed the first phase of archaeological work associated with the construction of the Compact Road on Babeldaob. That project is still on-going (carried out by the company I work for, and with which I have had some involvement). After his field work and the paper based on it, Wickler faced the problem that the continuing research produced "rapidly accumulating field data," so his solution to this problem is to summarize the new data, analyses, and interpretations in the field reports written and edited by his successor. This long-term project is radically changing our understanding of the archaeology of Palau, and as more data are retrieved and analyzed it will continue to change. The synthesis and the reports with detailed data will be available in early 2004, and they will present a complex history of Palauan socio-cultural change that is well expressed in a mutually effective relationship between humans and the landscape.

Julie Fields' article on Fiji, relying heavily on GIS data and analysis, is a focused, problem-oriented study of variability in agricultural production in the Sigatoka Valley, and the relationship to environment, habitation, and defense. The variables are clearly defined and the argument explicit, and thus it is no surprise that there are defined and explicit conclusions, among them that defensive needs and strategies, rather than agriculture, was the dominating influence on settlement pattern and population density. One may quibble with some of the connecting arguments, but this is a model that deserves attention.

Roger C. Green's "A Retrospective View of Settlement Pattern Studies in Samoa" is as comprehensive as the title suggests. The retrospection includes a consideration of the history of the archaeological questions addressed in Samoan research, as well as of the nature of the prehistory of the island group itself. It concludes with a concise set of inferences about Samoan prehistory, including (p. 148) the continuity of settlement and subsistence for some 2000 years, with "concentration of settlements on the northwest and central coast of 'Upolu...the house society basis of its social organization...and lack of evidence for intensification..." Green is the only author to use the term "settlement pattern" with any frequency, but indicates that he began to use "landscape archaeology" about ten years ago as the more inclusive term, to include all dimensions of a regional study "from the environmental to the symbolic" (p. 128). It is certainly the consensus that landscape archaeology is more inclusive than settlement pattern archaeology, but curiously I see this in reverse, that landscape archaeology is a form of settlement pattern research. This aside, it will be unfortunate if change in terminology means that Roger's place as father of Pacific settlement pattern archaeology will be forgotten. (This will probably occur no matter what. Archaeologists are notoriously poor bearers of our own history. In an example relevant to the subject matter, Stoddard and Zubrow (1999:686) find it necessary to chastise the organizers of their published symposium on "Dynamic Landscapes" for their lack of knowledge of the

history of landscape archaeology.)

Atholl Anderson and Richard Walter's paper on Niue provides one of the more complete sets of landscape definitions to be found in the volume, and in so doing the result is also a judicious summary of Niue prehistory, with emphasis on the adaptation of a colonizing population to an isolated, small island with constrained resources. The authors develop a model of the "course of landscape development in Niuean prehistory" (p. 170) that contains many components for future research. One of the most interesting aspects of Niue is the geographic centrality of its limited resources. Compared to the general Polynesian high island pattern, where (p. 170-171): "...desirable resources distributed in a linear fashion are readily amenable to division among competitors there is no simple spatial solution to the division of a clumped resource [as exists on Niue]. Instead, it encouraged a diffuse competition by all parties for the same centralized patch.

Julie M. E. Taomia's study of Mangaia is another paper that provides an excellent summary of prehistory on its way to an analysis of settlement pattern and landscape. In this case the analytical emphasis is on social organization and the perception of landscape, and it provides a very clear summary of the relationship between the environmental zones of the island and "place" in the culturally defined world. There is also an exploration of structural variability in habitation and religious sites, and to the extent that this represents differences in individual decision-making rather than in social or temporal patterns.

Ethan E. Cochran's paper on the Windward Society Islands is not a general summary of settlement or prehistory of the region, but rather focuses on ceremonial architecture (*marae*) and distribution. There is a relatively long theoretical discussion of approaches to settlement analysis and of the background to his study, which is transmission theory and seriation methodology. As is the case with the paper by Sheppard et al., I find this discussion at once too lengthy for a regionally oriented volume, and too brief to allow sufficient discussion for clarity. However, the analysis itself (*marae* seriation and the implications for defining variation in space, time and the transmission process) is a fascinating model for Pacific archaeologists to consider for a number of different classes of data.

Christopher M. Stevenson's paper on Easter Island, like Cochran's, is a study of the distribution of ceremonial architecture, but its analytical base is cluster analysis, not seriation. This is a re-analysis of data for 164 *ahu* compiled by Martinsson-Wallin (1994), whose analysis employed a different statistical approach from that of Stevenson. Stevenson's goal is to define 16<sup>th</sup> century territorial organization and to compare that with the ethnographic districts. He identifies one relevant statistical cluster of *ahu*, and by combining the geographic distribution of the cluster's members with the distribution of elite villages he is able to argue for a district pattern very different from the one described several centuries later. The paper concludes with a well thought-out statement of the research implications for the prehistoric district model.

Michael W. Graves, Blaze V. O'Connor, and Thegn N. Ladefoged present a study of community boundaries and organization based on data from several locales on the leeward coast of the island of Hawai'i. The analysis is based on architectural seriation (like that of the Cochran paper), and the result is

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### Archaeological Approaches



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a model of change in the size of units, architectural variation through time, and differences in regional population growth. As the authors indicate, the model needs a great deal of further testing and refinement because some of the data are of questionable comparability and the independent dating leaves much to be desired. The paper would have been improved significantly if it

were accompanied by detailed maps of the regions studied (not simply points on the island) and some graphic presentations of spatial variation. There is another point that should be addressed. The authors say that "the spatial characteristics of Hawaiian community organization [defined] in archaeological terms...is a topic most anthropologists and archaeologists [in Hawai'i] take as a given..." the "given" being primarily the land unit boundaries identified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This statement is simply not true, and I was puzzled by the assertion until I realized that the authors have neglected referencing the two areas of the literature where this is commonly discussed: historical ethnographic research based on Hawaiian traditions, and the enormous CRM literature (call it "gray" if you wish, but this is where 99% of the archaeology in Hawai'i is reported, and these reports are readily available). However, these small problems aside, this study (and related work on temple seriation in Hawai'i) shows great potential for archaeological research in Hawai'i where it has been difficult to identify the significant factors producing architectural variability, and where chronology is a problem that needs as much methodological attention as possible.

Janet Davidson and Foss Leach's paper on settlement around the Cook Strait concludes the volume. It is a study of the prehistory and early history of the region, focused on subsistence and settlement tied to the question of the nature of interaction across the strait. Among other things the unique environment and history of the region are used to argue for a "subsistence model ...for Cook Strait [that] is fundamentally different from most models of economic change in New Zealand prehistory..." (p. 269). This is a succinct case study that emphasizes the importance of considering details of regional differences in the larger picture of settlement and landscape changes.

I suspect that every archaeologist who has worked in the Pacific has at one time or another written about islands as "anthropological laboratories." However, despite the many fine overviews and comparative summaries of Pacific cultures

(prehistoric and ethnographic) that have been written, comparative research has always fallen far short of the laboratory potential because data have been highly variable in quantity and quality, critical methods poorly developed (that is, means of replicable measurement of variables), and theory often muddled. This collection of papers and many other recent publications in journals and books indicate that this is rapidly changing. This is a solid set of papers that explores the complex interplay between human action and the environment (landscape), provides good summaries of the settlement pattern and prehistory of a number of islands or island groups, and contains a number of methodological and theoretical perspectives that deserve further attention, broader application, and refinement.

This is the ninth volume that the Easter Island Foundation has published since 1997. The EIF is to be congratulated for this continuing effort and for the fact that all of their publications are of substance. It is hoped that this will become one of the reliable series of Pacific publishing for decades to come.

Meanwhile, a bleary day has turned to sunshine, and I'm going outside to do some landscaping.

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#### *Circle of the Sea. Creations from Oceania*

Museum of Natural History, Providence, R. I. 2002.

Text by Norman Hurst.

96 pages. Full color, 9.5 x 11". ISBN 0-9646544-1-5. Available from Hurst Gallery, 54 Mount Auburn St., Cambridge MA 02138. Price \$20

Review by Deborah Waite, University of Hawai'i

The catalog *Circle of the Sea. Creations from Oceania* accompanied the similarly-named exhibition of artifacts from the Pacific in the collection of the Museum of Natural History, Roger Williams Park, Providence, Rhode Island. According to the Introduction written by Tracy Keogh, Museum Director and Marilyn Massaro, Curator of Collections, the exhibition opened a newly-restored Pacific Hall in June 2000. The opening followed a two-year period of renovation during which the artifacts had been restored, cleaned and appraised.

The Introduction to the catalog provides a history of the museum which first opened in 1896, and of the Pacific Hall which opened on May 11, 1954. The Pacific Hall was "de-installed" in the late 1970s, and by the mid-1980s the Pacific collection was closed to the public. A variety of factors had taken serious toll on the museum. Major renovations began to take place in the 1990s. Full details of the rise, fall, and re-awakening of this museum collection are contained in the Intro-